



READING:

PUTTING IT FIRST.
GETTING IT RIGHT.

FOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

As an educator, you know that reading is the cornerstone for all learning. Students who are not proficient readers by grade three often have more difficulty in other subject areas. And the problem affects too many students.

National data indicate that nearly 40 percent of fourth grade students do not read at grade level, thereby giving us an early warning signal that goals for high classroom achievement are in serious jeopardy.

However, school administrators can remedy this problem. Research is now available that tells how to provide every child with a good start in reading. By ensuring that teachers are well trained and supported in the use of scientifically based instructional methods, education administrators can help virtually all children become successful readers and life-long learners.

What Are the Essential Elements of Good Reading Instruction?

Good reading instruction utilizes strategies and programs that provide explicit and systematic instruction in five components of reading. Those components are:

- ◉ **PHONEMIC AWARENESS**—the ability to hear, identify, and play with individual sounds— or phonemes—in spoken words
- ◉ **PHONICS**—an understanding that there is a relationship between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language
- ◉ **FLUENCY**—the capacity to read text accurately and quickly
- ◉ **VOCABULARY**—the knowledge of words students must have to communicate effectively
- ◉ **COMPREHENSION**—the ability to understand and gain meaning from what has been read

Good reading instruction includes explicit and systematic instructional strategies.

Good reading instruction also requires a coordinated instructional sequence, aligned with instructional materials, and allows ample practice opportunities.

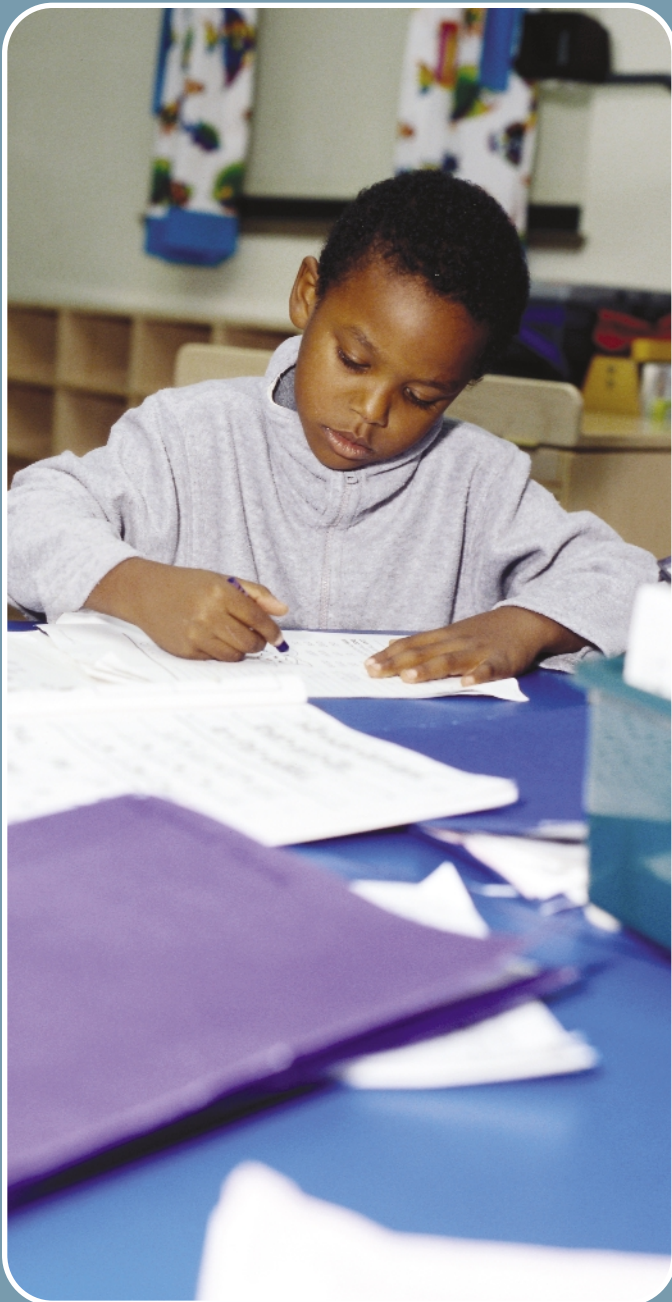
What Can School Administrators Do?

School administrators have a critical leadership role to play in helping students become good readers. Administrators can create the framework for success.

They can help ensure this vision of success becomes a reality for students by addressing several instructional needs. Here is what every school should have:

- ◉ A comprehensive reading program grounded on scientifically based reading research, with all components of the program carefully aligned so that instruction is seamlessly organized.
- ◉ Instructional materials geared to the specific needs of the children in that school. Administrators should ensure the use of materials that provide highly explicit and systematic instruction.
- ◉ High-quality initial training and ongoing staff development for teachers that focuses on the foundational concepts of learning to read and the use of a selected comprehensive reading program. Professional development must focus on helping the teacher apply the proven principles of effective classroom reading instruction.
- ◉ Adequate and uninterrupted time must be provided for reading instruction. Too often, schools allocate a sufficient quantity of time, but allow it to be broken up, which is not effective. Also, children who are behind must be provided extra instructional time.
- ◉ A system for regular assessment of student progress throughout the school year, using valid and reliable classroom-based instructional assessments to determine whether goals are being reached by the expected time.
- ◉ Data from classroom assessments that can be used to determine where help is needed at a classroom, school, and district level. All educators must be trained to use data to make appropriate and effective instructional decisions.
- ◉ Intervention must be provided when student progress is not adequate, rather than when it is not at desired levels. The intervention should provide help that aligns with the overall reading program and targets the identified areas where the student requires additional instruction.

To find out more about The Partnership for Reading and scientifically based reading instruction log on to www.nifl.gov/partnershipforreading.



The Partnership for Reading

This brochure was published by **The Partnership for Reading**, a collaborative effort of the **National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)**, the **National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD)**, the **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** and the **U.S. Department of Education** to make evidence-based reading research available to educators, parents, policymakers, and others with an interest in helping all people learn to read well.

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